

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

COMPACTABLE PAINTBALL MARKER SQUEEGEE

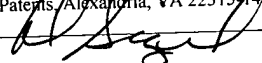
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COMPACTABLE PAINTBALL MARKER SQUEEGEE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application hereby claims priority to and is a continuation-in-part of U.S. provisional application Serial No. 60/452,433, filed on March 5, 2003, which is hereby incorporated by
5 reference.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

Not Applicable.

REFERENCE TO A MICROFICHE APPENDIX

10 Not Applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention.

The present invention relates to the field of elongated projectile barrel cleaning devices in general. In particular, the present invention relates specifically to a cleaning device for provide a
15 squeegee action for cleaning the inside of a paintball marker. Known art in various other types of cleaning devices may be found in U.S. Class 15, Brushing, Scrubbing, and General Cleaning, Subclass 104.05 Inside, Subclass 104.16 Scraper, Cutter, Wiper or Brush, Subclass 104.062 Cleaner Plug Insertion or Removal Device, Subclass 104.68 Scraper Flue Cleaner, Subclass 104.31 Sewer, Subclass 143.1 Particular Handle, Subclass 144.1 Adjustable, Subclass 144.3
20 Variable Length; and Class 42 Firearms, Subclass 95 For Barrel Cleaning as well as in other classes and subclasses.

2. Description of the Known Art.

As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, a solid elongated squeegee or pull through type of squeegee may be used to clean the inside of a market barrel. Details of a typical solid elongated squeegee include an inner solid tube holding a pivotal squeegee head and an
5 outer spring biased tube to release the head and allow it to fold sideways for insertion into the barrel. The outer spring biased tube is then released to contact the inserted head to force the head into a perpendicular relationship for squeegee cleaning during removal from the barrel. Other cleaning devices include a foldable cleaner that uses a fluff or swab head on a split tube using a surgical tube connection to provide a folding action. The fluff head provide a wiping
10 action for the inside of the barrel. However, the wiping action of the fluff head type of cleaner does not provide the level of cleaning associated with a squeegee type of action.

Several United States Patents should be considered to understand cleaning devices. These include U.S. Patent No. Des. 237,678, issued to Spencer on November 18, 1975; U.S. Patent No. Des. 393,115, issued to Bell et al. March 31, 1998; U.S. Patent No. 43,573, issued to
15 Crane on July 19, 1864; U.S. Patent No. 5,370,105, issued to Firman on December 6, 1994; U.S. Patent No. 57,846, issued to Bausman on September 11, 1866; U.S. Patent No. 143,139, issued to Gould on September 23, 1873; U.S. Patent No. 312,206, issued to Jenks on February 10, 1885; U.S. Patent No. 426,912, issued to Butman on April 29, 1890; U.S. Patent No. 504,426, issued to Truax on September 5, 1893; U.S. Patent No. 569,060, issued to Roberts and McCormick on
20 October 6, 1896; and U.S. Patent No. 2,484,267, issued to Bower on October 11, 1949. Each of these patents are hereby expressly incorporated by reference in their entirety.

U.S. Patent No. Des. 237,678 issued to Spencer on November 18, 1975 describes a firearm chamber lubricating and cleaning device. This is a design patent which discloses the

embodiment of the swab or fluff type head. It appears that a central joint or pivot is formed in the handle of this cleaning device.

U.S. Patent No. Des. 393,115 issued to Bell et al. on March 31, 1998 describes a cleaning device for paintball gun barrels. As this device does not fold, its usefulness is only in the
5 description of the shape of the squeegee portion of the barrel cleaner.

U.S. Patent No. 43,573 issued to Crane on July 19, 1864 discloses a gun-barrel scraper which describes a compactable and expandable instrument for cleaning the interior of a barrel of a gun.

U.S. Patent No. 5,370,105 issued to Firman on December 6, 1994 discloses a squeegee
10 holder. This patent describes the use of a flexible squeegee and swab end cleaner that may be bent and contained within a holder placed around the compressed air tank of a paint or pellet gun.

Thus, it may be seen that these prior art patents are very limited in their teaching and utilization. The prior art fails to disclose an embodiment or apparatus for providing the
15 necessary rigidity for a compactable rod used in a cleaner having a squeegee action. Thus, an improved compactable paintball marker squeegee is needed to overcome these limitations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a compactable paintball marker cleaner.

In accordance with one exemplary embodiment of the present invention, a compactable paintball marker cleaner is provided having a first arm with a first arm pivot end. The cleaner
5 also has a second arm with both a second arm pivot end and a cleaner end. The second arm pivot end is pivotally connected to the first arm pivot end. An elastic squeegee scraper is connected to the second arm cleaner end to provide a compactable squeegee cleaner.

Additional advantages are found in the initial end of the first arm which has a first arm guide defining an offset insertion guide, a spreader body, and/or a tip encasing offset. The first
10 arm may also define a compaction cavity so that a portion of the second arm can be compacted to nest in the compaction cavity of the first arm.

Further improvement may utilize a position lock that is adapted to secure the first arm in relation to the second arm to provide a rigid structure necessary for squeegee type cleaners. A unique design is provided wherein the position lock is adapted to be one hand operable for
15 opening and closing the squeegee so that it may be quickly and easily used on the field of play.

Yet a further improvement provides for a closed position retention mechanism adapted to secure the first and second arms in a closed position. In a preferred embodiment, the closed position retention mechanism uses a frictional engagement tab connected to the second arm that is adapted to frictionally engage the first arm.

20 A still further improvement teaches the use of a pear shaped scraper guide aperture for controlling the pivoting of the elastic squeegee scraper.

One embodiment teaches a compactable paintball marker squeegee that uses a first elongated body, a second elongated body adapted to be positioned in connection with the first

elongated body to provide both an extended cleaning position and a compacted storage position along with a squeegee end cleaner connected to the second arm.

A further embodiment teaches a compactable paintball marker cleaner having a first arm defining a compaction cavity with a second arm adjustably connected to the first arm to be
5 positioned in both an extend position and a compacted position, wherein at least a portion of the second arm is adapted to nest within the compaction cavity of the first arm. This embodiment also uses a cleaner head connected to the cleaning rod.

A still further embodiment teaches a paintball marker cleaner having an elastic squeegee scraper connected to an arm. The operation of this basic embodiment of the scraper is controlled
10 by a pear shaped scraper guide aperture in the arm.

These and other objects and advantages of the present invention, along with features of novelty appurtenant thereto, will appear or become apparent by reviewing the following detailed description of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

In the following drawings, which form a part of the specification and which are to be construed in conjunction therewith, and in which like reference numerals have been employed throughout wherever possible to indicate like parts in the various views:

5 Figure 1 is an isometric view of an exemplary embodiment of the compactable squeegee.

Figure 2 is a top view of the embodiment of Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a cutaway view of the embodiment of Figure 2 along line A-A.

Figure 4 is a left side view of the embodiment of Figure 1.

Figure 5 is a back view of the embodiment of Figure 1.

10 Figure 6 is a front view of the embodiment of Figure 1.

Figure 7 is a bottom view of the embodiment of Figure 1.

Figure 8 is a right side view of the embodiment of Figure 1 with the squeegee head pivoted into a compacted position.

15 Figure 9 is an isometric view of the compactable squeegee of Figure 1 in a slightly open position.

Figure 10 is a top view of the embodiment of Figure 9.

Figure 11 is a cutaway view of the embodiment of Figure 10 along line B-B.

Figure 12 is a left side view of the embodiment of Figure 9.

Figure 13 is a back view of the embodiment of Figure 9.

20 Figure 14 is a front view of the embodiment of Figure 9.

Figure 15 is a bottom view of the embodiment of Figure 9.

Figure 16 is a right side view of the embodiment of Figure 9.

Figure 17 is an isometric view of the compactable squeegee of Figure 1 in a slightly closed position.

Figure 18 is a top view of the embodiment of Figure 17.

Figure 19 is a cutaway view of the embodiment of Figure 18 along line C-C.

5 Figure 20 is a left side view of the embodiment of Figure 17.

Figure 21 is a back view of the embodiment of Figure 17.

Figure 22 is a front view of the embodiment of Figure 17.

Figure 23 is a bottom view of the embodiment of Figure 17.

Figure 24 is a right side view of the embodiment of Figure 17.

10 Figure 25 is a top view of the squeegee in a fully open position with the squeegee perpendicular for use inside a marker barrel.

Figure 26 is a cutaway view of the embodiment of Figure 25 along line D-D.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

As shown in Figures 1-26 of the drawings, one exemplary embodiment of the present invention is generally shown as a compactable paintball marker squeegee 100. Figures 25 and 26 show the compactable paintball marker cleaner 100 in an extend position 102, also referred to as a cleaning position 102 in which it operates as ram type squeegee. One unique aspect of the present invention is shown in Figures 1 through 8 which show the squeegee 100 in a compacted position 104, also known as a storage position 104. The compactable paintball marker squeegee 100 uses a first elongated arm 106 pivotally connected to a second elongated arm 144 for compaction while still provided the rigid capability for using a squeegee type of cleaner head 198.

The first elongated arm 106 includes a tip protector 108 which provides several advantages. The tip protector 108 has a first arm guide 108 that allows for easy insertion of the squeegee 100 into a pocket or sleeve on clothing. A lanyard loop 109 is also provided in this guide 108. One advantage of the tip protector 108 of the present invention is that it provides an offset insertion guide 110 to protect the cleaner head 198 during the insertion process. A still further advantage is provided by the tip protector 108 because it is widened to form a spreader body 112 to further protect the cleaner head 198 during the clothing insertion process. The tip protector 108 also has a curved internal radius to form a tip encasing offset 114 so that the head 198 may be pivoted into the tip encasing offset 114 for protection as shown in Figure 8.

The tip protector 108 of the first elongated arm 106 is connected to the main first body 116. The main first body 116 is constructed from a first side wall 118 and a second side wall 122 connected to a base wall 120. These walls define an elongated cavity 124 which operates as

a compaction aperture 124, also known as a compaction cavity 124, along the length of the first elongated arm 106.

The distal end of the first elongated arm 106 is shown as a first arm hinge wing end 128, also known as a first arm pivot end 128. The first arm pivot end 128 defines a left pivot pin aperture 130 and a right pivot pin aperture 132 as well as a left lock pin aperture 134 and a right lock pin aperture 136. The first elongated arm 106 further defines a lock arm cavity 138 for the lock arm 184 which defines a pivot end cavity 140 allowing operation of the lock arm 184 and a spring seat 142.

The second elongated arm 144 includes a second arm wing end 146, also known as a second arm pivot end 146 includes a hinge extension 156 defining a central pivot pin aperture 148 and a lock arm catch 150. The first arm hinge wing end 128 and second arm wing end 146 are pivotally connected to provide the compacting action of the present invention. The second arm wing end 146 is connected to the main second body 152 which is constructed from a central wall 154, also known as a center wall 154 and a back wall 160 in a T-shape. The lock arm catch 150 is shown as a lock encasing offset 158 which operates with the locking finger 186 of the lock arm 184.

A closed position retention mechanism 162 is shown mounted on the center wall 154 and is shown as a friction retaining projection 164, also known as an engagement tab 164 which is adapted to wedge inside the compaction cavity 124 of the first elongated arm 106 to hold the squeegee 100 in a compacted position.

The distal end of the second arm defines a second arm tip end 166, also known as a second arm cleaner end 166. The second arm cleaner end 166 has a tip extension 168 which defines a pear-shaped aperture 170, also known as a pear-shaped scraper guide 170. This pear

shaped scraper guide 170 provides additional control by providing a central pulling position and a variable offset for side pivot positions. As the squeegee 100 is pulled down the length of the marker barrel, the pear shaped scraper guide 170 guides the pin ears 208 of the cleaner head 198 to a central position in the barrel. The friction of the cleaner head 198 against the marker barrel
5 pulls the cleaner head 198 into the narrow end 172 of the pear shaped aperture 170 and pivots the head 198 into a substantially perpendicular position for cleaning the barrel as shown in Figures 25-26. Once the cleaner head 198 is free from the marker barrel, the larger portion of the pear shaped scraper guide 170 allows the head to rest against the second arm tip end 166 and transfer any impacts which would break the pivoting connections used on prior art designs. Thus, the
10 present invention improves the operation of the cleaner head 198 by allowing for increases breakage resistance while still providing for the requisite cleaning action.

The hinge 174 connecting the first elongated arm 106 to the second elongated arm 144 is a simple design using a pivot pin 176 with an appropriate pin diameter and pin length to wedge in place in the arms 106, 144 and provide a pivotal motion.

15 The position lock 182 uses a lock arm 184 having a locking finger 186 to engage the second arm 144. The lock arm 184 is positioned so that a downward force will release the second arm 144 to allow pivoting movement of the arms 106, 144. In this manner, the same operator hand that holds the squeegee 100 may press the lock release handle 190 to open the lock 182. Thus, the lock is one hand operable. The lock arm 184 defines a pivot aperture 188 for
20 providing the pivotal motion of the lock arm 184 on a lock pivot pin 194 held in place in the first elongated arm 106. The lock arm 184 also includes the release handle 190 defining a spring recess 192 for retaining the lock spring 196 which biases the lock 182 in an engaged position.

The cleaner head 198 is attached to the end of the second elongated arm 144. The cleaner head 198 is also known as a squeegee end cleaner 198 and includes a scraper tip 200 having a tip body 202 and a elastic squeegee scraper 210. The tip body 202 includes a scraper support 204 connected to a pivot projection 206 having pin ears 208 for connection into the second elongated arm 144.

Reference numbers used throughout the specifications and drawings refer to the following:

- Compactable paintball marker squeegee 100
- compactable paintball marker cleaner 100
- an extend position 102
- cleaning position 102
- compacted position 104
- storage position 104
- first elongated arm 106
- tip protector 108
- first arm guide 108
- lanyard loop 109
- offset insertion guide 110
- spreader body 112
- tip encasing offset 114
- main first body 116
- first side wall 118
- base wall 120

second side wall 122

elongated cavity 124

compaction aperture, compaction cavity 124

compaction cavity 124

5 first arm hinge wing end 128

first arm pivot end 128

left pivot pin aperture 130

right pivot pin aperture 132

left lock pin aperture 134

10 right lock pin aperture 136

lock arm cavity 138

pivot end cavity 140

spring seat 142

second elongated arm 144

15 second arm wing end 146

second arm pivot end 146

central pivot pin aperture 148

lock arm catch 150

main second body 152

20 central wall 154

center wall 154

hinge extension 156

lock encasing offset 158

back wall 160

closed position retention mechanism 162

friction retaining projection 164

engagement tab 164

5 second arm tip end 166

second arm cleaner end 166

tip extension 168

pear-shaped aperture 170

pear-shaped scraper guide 170

10 narrow end 172

hinge 174

pivot pin 176

pin diameter 178

pin length 180

15 position lock 182

lock arm 184

locking finger 186

pivot aperture 188

release handle 190

20 spring recess 192

lock pivot pin 194

lock spring 196

cleaner head 198

squeegee end cleaner 198

scraper tip 200

tip body 202

scraper support 204

5 pivot projection 206

pin ears 208

elastic squeegee scraper 210

From the foregoing, it will be seen that this invention well adapted to obtain all the ends and objects herein set forth, together with other advantages which are inherent to the structure. It
10 will also be understood that certain features and subcombinations are of utility and may be employed without reference to other features and subcombinations. This is contemplated by and is within the scope of the claims. Many possible embodiments may be made of the invention without departing from the scope thereof. Therefore, it is to be understood that all matter herein set forth or shown in the accompanying drawings is to be interpreted as illustrative and not in a
15 limiting sense.